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March 11, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Pelosi, Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

As the House and Senate work to pass the continuing resolution for fiscal year 2013, I urge you to take additional action to strengthen our national security by ensuring the Department of Homeland Security has the necessary resources and flexibility to maintain personnel hours at the U.S.-Mexico border.

While we have made progress to secure our borders over the last several years with additional agents on the ground and advancements in technology, this work is far from over and these investments are more critical than ever. Under sequestration, our nation will see a devastating

rollback of staffing and security at the border. We must act to reverse these cuts to ensure the safety of my constituents and the security of the nation.

With sequestration underway, the Department of Homeland Security already has begun to send personnel notices of furloughs and additional cuts to hours and pay. These furloughs and reductions in hours go far beyond the cuts that are being felt across other federal agencies and programs because personnel costs make up the majority of the DHS's budget. Our borders are not secured by people who work in Washington. The personnel, hours and pay being cut are from agents on the ground at our borders. They represent our most effective border security measure.

While the House and Senate have acknowledged the need to provide additional resources to maintain staffing at the border, the final Continuing Resolution for fiscal year 2013 must not only ensure the department can maintain staffing levels, but ensure that it can maintain full hours of operation at our borders.

Our borders are not secure unless they are enforced around the clock. Cuts to agents' overtime hours and the implementation of furloughs will leave border patrol stations understaffed and forward operating bases unmanned. This creates windows of opportunity for criminals and terrorists to cross our borders. We must maintain full continuity in security efforts on the border.

Our national security is at risk and it is the responsibility of Congress to provide the full resources necessary to keep this nation safe. I urge you to act quickly to pass the legislation we need to secure our borders.

Sincerely,



Ron Barber
Member of Congress